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SERMON CCCCXCV.

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THE RICHEST TREASURE.*

"More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold."—PSALMS
19: 10.

WHEN, half a century ago, the first settlers of Western New York were about leaving their home in New England for what was then a wilderness, the entire village, we are told, assembled with them at the house of God, where together they had so often worshipped. There, by the minister of Christ, they were addressed on the subject of their expedition—were commended to heaven by prayer, and then, amid weeping and sadness, took their mournful farewell—no more, as they supposed, again to meet their friends on earth. They went forth somewhat as the first settlers of New England went when leaving the shores beyond the Atlantic, with no thought of ever returning. And going with these feelings, no wonder they turned their thoughts to the religious themes suggested by the separations of *life* as of *death*, and desired to be commended to Him, without whose care no one is ever safe.

A feeling kindred to theirs doubtless originated the interesting and salutary custom which prevails here, and at other whaling ports, of preaching on board the vessel that is soon to go forth with those who follow their calling on the waves—counseling her crew from the oracles of God, and commending them to Him who rules alike on the land and on the deep. And surely the same course is most appropriate in the circumstances that assemble us this morning; assemble us in the house of God, when, but for the severity of the season, we might be gathered on the departing ship. These circumstances need no explanation. Multitudes, as we all know,

* A discourse preached to a company of California emigrants, and eminently adapted to the signs of the times.—*Ed.*

are going forth from every port of our land ; all eager and joyous with hope ; all, *desiring*—most, *expecting* wealth ; all, now in health ; most, looking forward to the time when they shall return again, with competence, if not with riches ; some, intending to settle in their new abode, and planning for business, and dreaming of prosperity and happiness there.

But of all these, numbers—great numbers, will beyond question be disappointed. Though with confidence they may

“ Map their future, like some unknown coast,
And say, here is a harbor—there a rock—
The one we will attain—the other shun ;
They will do neither ! ”

Some, doubtless, will have sunk to their last sleep, and their bodies be committed to the ocean—registered for the voyage to a distant shore, they will have made the voyage to eternity—long before the vessel in which they started will have reached its intended port ! Some will be the victims of the sickness, and sorrow, and suffering, which are watching in ambush all along the pathway of the future ; and some, instead of gathering riches from the desert, will leave their bones to bleach and whiten its sands ! And even of those who are spared and in safety reach the end of their course, multitudes will fall short of their expectations. They will find the *gold* of the future, like its *happiness*, a thing that flies as they advance ; and while the few, as in the lottery, succeed perhaps abundantly, the great mass will never grasp their anticipated prosperity. The history of extensive emigration has almost ever been the history of benefit to the country in the end, but of hardship, privation, disappointment, suffering to individuals, at the outset and in their progress : and there is no reason why the immense emigration now going forth from every part of our land should be an exception ; while there is danger that an emigration for gold, infatuated, anti-social, irregular as in many respects it must be, will be attended with peculiar evils. With all these possibilities, probabilities, then gathering about it, well does it become those who are going forth, to go with thoughtfulness ; and as they go, to hear what God, by his truth, may speak unto them. If the Roman soldier, heathen as he was, would not go out to battle without consulting the auspices of the soothsayer, much more should those who are going out to the adventures, it may be to the severest hardships of the battle of life, inquire as they go, for counsel, wisdom, and direction, at the oracles of the living God.

One of the many responses from those oracles is sounded to us in the text. Speaking of the teachings of God's Word—of its instructions, counsels, directions, warnings, and of their fitness and value to guide us in our daily conduct, the Psalmist declares, “ More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold.” Two thoughts, then, are here suggested for our consideration :

1. The *implied* truth, that gold is valuable; and, 2. The *expressed* truth, that the teachings of God's Word and conformity to them, are of infinitely greater value.

I. *The text implies that GOLD IS VALUABLE, AND OF COURSE DESIRABLE.* But on this point, it may be said it is needless to dwell, since all the world by their actions, their constant and eager pursuit, show they are fully, alas! but too fully, satisfied of its value; and why, it may be asked, why dwell upon even a *truth* that may be perverted to madden the fever already burning like fire? Because, I reply, the world very often pursues that which is *not* valuable, or seeks that which *has* value for wrong reasons, and from wrong motives; and every object should be seen in its true light. We have heard, too, one of the most distinguished statesmen of the present age, ignorantly misquoting the Scriptures, and saying in the halls of the nation, that "*money* was the root of all evil!" And in common life, large and universal as is the pursuit of wealth, we often hear the intimation, that the *desire* for it implies contractedness, meanness, littleness of thought, and spirit. Prose has exhausted its epithets, and poetry its figures, argument its logic, and rhetoric its tropes, to pour contempt on the pursuit of riches—a pursuit in which those most prompt to sneer at it, are often most ready to engage.

The Bible, however, places wealth on the same footing with every other temporal good—to be regarded in the same manner, esteemed for the same reasons, sought in the same spirit, and used for the same end. Its very first mention of gold is in connection with the garden of Eden, and its last with the New Jerusalem—the heavenly city. It compares the tried and purified Christian to gold from the furnace; it informs us that God gave riches to Solomon as a mark of his favor; it describes the Son of Man, when appearing in his glory, as having on his head a golden crown. Its doctrine is, that *property*, like health, intellect, knowledge, influence, character, is a *talent*, entrusted by God, and to be used and accounted for to Him. It is like *food*, which, properly eaten, contributes to health, but improperly and excessively, brings on surfeiting, fever, death. It is like *water*, which, kept without the ship, aids her to float on to her desired haven; but allowed to enter and fill that ship, is her ruin. Held with a right spirit, and used to right ends, it is like the *air* when moving in the healthful breeze, the minister of comfort, enjoyment, life; held with a wrong spirit, and used to wrong ends, it is like the same air when tainted with the pestilence, or swept by the tornado, the medium of injury and death.

It is not *gold*, but the *love*, that is, the *excessive, supreme love* of gold, which the Bible teaches is "*the root of all evil*"—which it declares is "*idolatry*." The patriarch does not say, "If I have *possessed* gold," but, "If I have made gold *my hope*, or said to

the fine gold, thou art *my confidence*, *this* were an iniquity." The Saviour does not exclaim, "How hardly shall they that *have* riches," but as his own explanation is, "How hard is it for them that *trust* in riches, to enter into the kingdom of God!" Sought as a means to an end, like every other means, wealth is valuable for a thousand things; sought merely as an end, it becomes a curse. Properly used, it is a good: abused it is an evil. In the one case, it is "the load-stone to draw men nearer to God;" in the other, "the mill-stone, to sink them to perdition." To *possess* gold, other things being equal, is a blessing. To *be* possessed by it, and by the love of it, is to be possessed by a devil, and one of the basest and worst kind of devils. Gold in the *hand* is well, if it do not get into the *heart*; though, alas! it often gets into the latter, when not in the former. The great distinction which Christ makes is, on the one hand, "laying up treasure for self," that is, in the selfish spirit and for selfish ends, and on the other, "being rich toward God," that is, holding our property as his stewards, and ever being ready to use it for Him. Everywhere the Bible inculcates those virtues, honesty, industry, forethought, prudence, &c., which *tend* to wealth, and it equally and everywhere enjoins, that whatever wealth we possess, we hold at God's disposal, and use as He directs.

Sneer though some may at gold-digging, there are gold-diggers here, all about us, in the shop, and the counting-house, and the office, in the crowded city, or the quiet village, as well as on our distant coasts. And the one class is not necessarily more inclined to mammon-worship than the other. To either, the pursuit is lawful and proper if properly followed. Morally, and in itself considered, gold-hunting on the land is as proper as whale-hunting on the deep, or wealth-hunting in the ways of business. It may not be as *wise*; and we may, if we choose, question the *judgment* of those who engage in it: though it is difficult, if not impossible, for those who are settled in regular and prosperous business, fully to appreciate the position and feelings of the many enterprising young men in our land, who, finding the various avenues of business crowded to overflowing, gladly go forth to a new and unoccupied field of effort and hoped-for success. But whether the emigration be wise or unwise, and *that*, each must decide for himself, yet *morally*, whether here or there, the pursuit is, in its nature, the same—the same to the lawyer in his office, the mechanic in his workshop, the merchant in his counting-house, or the sand-sifter on the banks of the modern Pactolus.

In either case, it is the *end* proposed, the *motive* that influences, the *inward feeling*, by which we are to judge of the *outward act*. "Why does each seek for wealth?" This is the all-important question. Is it for God or self? Is it to be used, first, as was intended by Heaven, to supply our own wants, and the wants of those dependent on us, and next, in benevolence to others? Or

is it sought only for self-indulgence, to enable its possessor to live in idleness or luxury, or to gain worldly honor and influence and respect? Is it to do good, as becomes the Christian, or to be able to say, "Soul, take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry?" According to the answer, in each case, must be the decision. If wealth be sought with the one class of motives and feelings, whether here or there, the individual is in the way of sin; and if with the other, whether here or there, he is in the way of duty. Place does not create a difference. California is as near to heaven, and alas! as near to hell too, as our own beloved New England! And there as here, gold, if sought with a right spirit, and to be used for right ends, is of value—the means to a thousand important ends—the channel of multiplied blessings—the minister of food, raiment, comfort, intelligence—an agent of power for doing good, spreading happiness, sustaining the cause of benevolence, sending the gospel and the missionary to the ends of the earth. Our subject, then, does not say, as some would do, "Beware of gold," or "Beware of going in search of it," but it does say, with the Saviour, "Beware of covetousness;" and the very spirit and essence of covetousness it finds in the supreme and selfish love, and the selfish possession and use of property—in "laying up treasure for self," and not being "rich toward God!"

But valuable as wealth is, when rightly sought and used, our text points us to what it declares of infinitely greater value, namely,

II. *To the PRINCIPLES AND TEACHINGS OF GOD'S WORD.* Of these it expressly proclaims, "More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold." And they are so,

1. *Because, so far as wealth is valuable, the Bible inculcates the principles and virtues that aid to secure it.* As it is true of the New Testament, that though it nowhere enjoins any specific form of civil government, yet the *tendency* of all its great principles is to human freedom, so that tyrants fear and hate it, so it is as to the subject before us. Nowhere does the Bible point out localities of gold, or silver, or precious stones; but it does inculcate the virtues that tend to prosperity, and denounce the vices that lead to poverty. From the very insects beneath our feet, it draws the lessons of diligence and labor. It declares that the sluggard is "as vinegar to the teeth, and as smoke to the eyes." It warns the idler, who will not plough in the winter, that he shall be left to beggary in the harvest. It enjoins, and all its great principles lead, to that industry, honesty, enterprise, good judgment, and good faith; that method, accuracy, promptness; that devotion to business and not to pleasure; that knowledge of man, and that quick discernment of truth and falsehood; that wise adjustment of plans, and their diligent and energetic prosecution; that proportioned and discreet good sense, that knows where to stop, as well as where to begin; all of which tend to prosperity and wealth. Even

for this world, it is, as the general rule, sound true, that "in keeping God's commandments, there is great reward."

And so, on the other hand, the Bible forbids those vices that prevent the acquisition of wealth, or that waste it when acquired.

Set a man down—his voyage over—in the midst of the richest gold regions of the earth, and let him yield to certain kinds of temptation, and in the midst of all the wealth around him, he will still be poor. Let him, for example, abandon himself to *intoxication*—for mournful as is the fact, there are those so lost to every spark of principle and humanity—poisoners of men and panders to devils—as to be sending out intoxicating drinks with the tide of emigration—let him yield to the temptation thus set before him, and he will soon be unfitted for picking up the very gold that may abound at his feet, and most admirably fitted for quickly losing, even if he has found it. His brains being gone from his head, the gold from his pocket will speedily follow; be stolen away when he knows it not, or wheedled away in foolish bargains, by villains more sober, but less principled than himself, or recklessly squandered in guilty, sottish indulgence. Let the individual, again, give way to the excitements of *gambling*, a vice which the Bible forbids as well as intemperance, and a few short hours may dissipate the wealth that weeks, or months, or years may have gathered. And the same general remark may be made of the *observance of the Sabbath*: for it is only where the Sabbath is kept, that the *morality* of the Sabbath is found; and where it is habitually violated, there insults, robberies, drunkenness, gambling, violence, and a lawless and murderous state of life and manners, will soon abound; and on the Pacific coast, as here, there is no safety for the man, either as to property or success, who will trample on God's holy day. Such an one has deliberately "forsaken the Most High, and entered on the devil's ground, and is tempting the destroyer to tempt and destroy him," and provoking God to curse him for time and eternity. In all these and many other things, it needs but little reflection to satisfy us, that whether directly to the individual, or indirectly to him through the community where he dwells, "Godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is," as well as "of that which is to come." Of the great principles of God's Word, faithfully carried out in practice, even the gold-seeker, if thoughtful and candid, will be constrained to say, that, as tending to permanent prosperity, "More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold."

This is further true of the great principles of the Bible, because

2. *They give directly the very blessings that men seek to obtain indirectly by the possession of wealth.* No one but the miser (*miserable* in etymology and fact) seeks gold for its own sake. He, with insane and consummate folly, may live for wealth as *in itself* an end, robbing himself that he may save his gold, for it "throw-

ing up his interest in *both* worlds—first *starved* in this, then *dammèd* in that to come!" But every one who has the sanity of common sense, seeks it only as a means to some end; and that end is happiness, or what the individual thinks will afford it. One foolishly supposes that inactivity and rest are synonymous with happiness; and seeks wealth, that when he obtains it, he may have nothing to do but to vegetate in idleness. Another fancies it will be found in the indulgence of appetite, and another, in splendid living, another in influence over his fellow-men, and still another, in being known and talked of, and perhaps envied as the possessor of large estates; and each desires and toils for wealth as the means of attaining his favorite form of happiness.

Now, even if in all these cases happiness were to be found in the things supposed, it is still true that *two* steps are requisite to reach it, and the first a step it may need years or even a life-time to take, while the Bible offers either the same or a higher form of happiness to a single step, and that one which may be taken in a moment. Is wealth desired as affording peace within, or freedom from annoyance and vexation without? "Great peace have they which love thy law, and nothing shall offend them." Is it sought as conducive to dignity and exaltation? "Exalt" wisdom, "and she shall promote thee: she shall bring thee to honor when thou dost embrace her;" and "if any man," says Christ, "serve me, him will my Father honor." Is it followed as a means of procuring pleasure? Religion's ways "are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace." Is it wished as a provision for future necessities, or a security against future want? "Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." Is it longed for as giving freedom from toil, anxiety, and care? "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest:" "Rest from the vexations and labors and cares of the world, rest in the arms of infinite love, rest eternal in the paradise of God!" And all these blessings we have but to ask, that we may receive; while the wealth of this world, if ever so eagerly sought, is uncertain of attainment, and if attained, never, *never* gives the happiness that was expected from it, while the offers of religion are always present and available offers, and in every case the blessedness she gives is satisfying and sure. Tested, then, by the *end* which men propose to themselves in seeking wealth, the Bible and the faith and salvation it offers, are "More to be desired than gold, yea, than much fine gold."

This will further appear, if we consider,

3. *That the principles of the Bible, and only those principles, can make the possession of wealth a blessing.* Give a man gold, all that his largest desires could wish, and yet let his principles be wrong, his temper ungoverned, his appetites and passions uncon-

trolled, his conscience at war (as the sinner's conscience for ever is) with his reason and better judgment, and his wealth will but minister to his unhappiness. Instead of being like the fire when kept in its proper place, a source of warmth, utility, and comfort, it will be like the same fire bursting forth, and kindling on, and wrapping his dwelling in flames, acting only to burn and destroy. Hoarding his riches, or using them only for self, not keeping them bright by good and holy uses, he will find that, even in this world, "his gold and silver are cankered, and the rust (ah! the rust!) of them is a swift witness against him, to eat his flesh as if it were fire!" Selfishly and sinfully *breaking the bond that should unite riches with benevolence, and wealth with usefulness*, he has broken the bond between himself and happiness. Taking his treasures, like the prodigal, into the far-off and forbidden country of self-indulgence, away from his father's house and the sympathies of suffering humanity, he shall find they are but husks to his soul, and be a stranger to abiding happiness, till like the prodigal he resolves, "I will arise and go to my father!"

To the one, on the other hand, whose principles are right, whose temper is governed, whose appetites and passions are controlled, whose conscience is at peace with himself and God, whose life is benevolent, that is, to the real Christian—wealth, like any other gift of God, is a blessing. Such an one, through grace, has discovered that the true value of wealth consists in its proper use. He has found out the divine secret, that "it is more blessed to give than to receive." He keeps his gold from rust, and his silver from canker by constant and holy use. Possessing it in a benevolent spirit, and using it to benevolent ends, he so improves the mammon of unrighteousness, as not only to make sure of God's favor for eternity, but to enjoy to the full all the happiness it can afford here on earth. For their influence, then, in making wealth where possessed a blessing even for this world, the principles of the Bible are "More to be desired than gold, yea, than much fine gold."—Omitting, for want of time, several other thoughts that might illustrate and impress the lesson of the text, I remark, but once more,

4. *That without the principles of the Bible, wealth is in vain, and in the end worse than in vain to the soul.* Centuries ago it was asked, and the question is one of fearful meaning, "What shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul; or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" Grant that the world could be gained, though well do we know it cannot, for at most we can pick up but a few of the sand-grains that compose it—grant that even the whole world could be gained, in a little while it will all be as nothing, and less than nothing, without God's favor and preparation for heaven. It will require but little to purchase the *grave* where we must soon sleep. It will be no comfort to the departing spirit to leave a little more by that

grave than is left by others. And if the universe were ours, as we pass to eternity, it could not blot out one single sin, or purchase God's favor, or bribe an entrance to eternal life. On the other hand, if misimproved, it would be the very ground of our condemnation, sinking us to the doom of him who asked, and asked in vain, in perdition, for a drop of water to cool his tongue!—Beware, then, of thinking too much of wealth. Seek it, if you will, as God's providence may permit, in the exercise of the virtues He enjoins, and for the ends His Word proposes; but see to it, that you seek *first* his kingdom and the righteousness thereof. Send forward your thoughts to the end of life, and follow after riches only with the feelings, motives, and aims that you can approve then. However you may *possess* gold, see to it that it *does not possess you*. Beware, I charge you in Christ's name, beware lest you so desire, or seek, or use wealth, that the footing up of the balance-sheet of your life shall read, "*Gained my wealth, but forfeited God's favor: saved my riches, but lost my soul!*"

In view of the subject we have been considering, we are admonished in closing,

1. *To beware of a covetous spirit.*—The proper pursuit of wealth, as we have seen, is not only permitted but encouraged by God, as developing the character, cultivating the virtues, and giving us the very discipline that we need in probation and for eternity. But, on the other hand, of all astringents, covetousness is the strongest; of all vices, the meanest. More than all others it degrades the character, and belittles and debases the entire soul. It is the blight of every generous and manly and kindly feeling; the root of all evil; the object of some of the fiercest woes denounced in the Word of God. It violates the entire moral law, for it is the love of self at the expense of both God and our neighbor. It destroyed Ananias and Sapphira; cast down Balaam from the glory of the prophets, and sent Judas from the apostleship to perdition. Many it makes careful and troubled about other things, so that they neglect the one thing needful; and sends them away, sorrowful, from the Saviour, because they will not give up the world for him. Too often, alas! it divides even the professed disciple's heart, so that while he prays, "Thy kingdom come," his *gifts* do not keep pace with his prayers. More than all things does it tend to bind us to the world, generating envy, discontent, and the feverish anxiety of possession; leading if not to disgraceful, yet too often to that decent selfishness which may ruin the soul. "The love of money," says another, "will, it is to be feared, prove the eternal overthrow of more professors of religion, than any other sin, because it is almost the only one that can be indulged while a profession of religion is sustained." Many there are that "*did run well for a season,*" but like Bunyan's professed pilgrims, Mr. Grasp-the-world, Mr. Money-love, and Mr. Save-all (names that may well stand for living realities), they have turned aside, at the call

of Demas to look at the mine of silver; and like them, they have either fallen over the brink, or gone down to dig, or have been smothered by the damps of the place, but whichever it may be, *they are no more seen in the pilgrim's path!*

And as deep as is the *guilt* of the covetous, so dark will be their *doom* hereafter. The day is near—it is speeding as on the lightning's wing—when, if covetous, your riches shall be corrupted, and your gold and silver cankered, and their rust shall be a swift witness against you. At the bar of judgment, your excuses shall be swept away. Having made gold your hope you shall be left to despair. Having laid up treasures only for self, God shall class you with the fool. Your riches shall testify to your folly, and the heavens shall reveal your iniquity, and the earth rise up against you, and hell open to receive you, and there, with the fearful, and unbelieving, and abominable, you shall lament for ever, that your very prosperity you have made your ruin!

Beware, then, of the spirit of covetousness, in whatever form it may appear. Prevent or cure it, by cherishing its opposite. Expand the soul with benevolence, and it cannot be contracted by the evil before us. Make it the abode of the good spirit of charity, and the evil spirit of selfishness will depart.—Bear in mind that you are God's stewards, and that on all you have he has written, "Occupy for me till I shall come." Forget not that if above all things "you *will* be rich," you will "err from the faith and pierce yourself through with many sorrows." Remember the example of Christ, and the tender, touching thought, that "though he was rich, yet for our sakes he became poor," and be moved by the melting appeal of his life to be followers of Him. Reflect, that a benevolent spirit, is but a part of religion, and if destitute of the former you also are of the latter. Remember the wants and woes, especially the spiritual wants and woes of others, and by all the freeness with which you have received, cherish the spirit that will ever lead you freely to give. And remember, too, that God's claims are upon you, and his bar of judgment just before you; and so live, wherever you may be, that when at last your stewardship is reviewed, the reward of the faithful, and not the doom of the unfaithful may be yours!

Our subject also suggests,

2. *That the circumstances of our country, especially in view of the present emigration to its western coast, are such as call for much prayer and effort on the part of every patriot and Christian.*—Cotton Mather tells us, that when he was once in the midst of a sermon "On the voice of God in the thunder," a message which he received that *his own house had just been struck by lightning, "gave a sensible edge to his discourse!"*—And so the personal, the deep personal interest that so many have in the vast emigration alluded to, should give "a sensible edge" to their sympathies, and prayers, and efforts. The emigrants who are going forth, are not

strangers, or from a strange land. They are *bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh*. Multitudes will soon have sons, brothers, husbands, fathers, relatives, and friends on that distant coast. And if they are not to be left to the power of temptation,—to go forth like Lot, as he went to the vale of Sodom, only with worldly motives, and like him to danger and ruin, where even angels could not save all his family,—then the gospel must go with them, and the spirit of God attend them.

We cannot but hope and believe, that in this, one of the most wonderful movements of this wondrous year, God has purposes of mercy for our land and the world; that He designs the planting of free States and Christian institutions, and the extension of commerce, the arts, and the Protestant religion; and that, on the rolling wave, He will roll civilization, and in the end salvation to a nation born in a day. But *we* must co-work with Him. Our prayers must ascend, and our efforts be put forth, and our gifts be sent, if we would see the gospel extended as fast and widely as our population spreads. When "HOME MISSIONS" meant the supply of a few feeble churches in New England, and a few more in New York and Ohio, feeble efforts might have been sufficient. But now that OUR HOME has grown to be a Continent; its roof the broad arch of heaven, its rooms the prairie and the forest, its halls the valleys of our mighty rivers, its walls two oceans on the east and west, and the torrid and frozen zones on the north and south—*now*, if we would keep *that home*, our house, in order, social, civil, moral, religious, we must not be wanting in corresponding prayer and benevolence. Now that "*Home Missions*" has come to signify providing the gospel for half a world, our faith and effort must expand with its necessities. Said a gentleman, recently, in view of these necessities, "I must *quadruple* my subscription for Home Missions this year, for the special purpose of sending the gospel to California." All should feel the same spirit, and as far as possible imitate so good an example.

Finally,

3. *Our subject suggests a word to those who are going forth to that distant part of our land.*—A gentleman once speaking with a young man who was comparatively a stranger, asked what were his plans for the future. "I am now a clerk," said the young man, "and my hope is to succeed, and get into business for myself." "And what then?" said the gentleman. "Why, then, I hope to prosper, and be able to set up an establishment of my own." "And what next?" "Then to continue in business, and accumulate wealth." "And what next?" "To retire from business, and enjoy the fruits of my labors." "And what next?" "It is the lot of all to die," said the young man thoughtfully, "and I cannot expect to escape." "*And what next?*" once more said the enquirer. But alas! the young man had no answer; he had no purposes or plans that reached beyond the present life! Thought-

ful for time, he had no thought for eternity! *Wise for this world, he was acting the fool for the next?*

Many, yes, all of you have your plans for this world. Step by step, it may be, you could tell what next, and next, and on for years, or perhaps even down to old age! But ask yourself one question, What if death should meet you at some early stage of that future—*what then?* Or even, if you live to old age, still *what then?* What, when life shall end, and sickness and death shall come? What when eternity must be entered, and you must go and give up your account to God?—Tell me, O! tell me, *what then?—WHAT THEN?*

SERMON CCCCXCVI.

BY REV. W. A. SCOTT, D.D.

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HOPE OF REPUBLICS ; OR THE ELEMENTS OF PERMANENCE IN MODERN CIVILIZATION.*

“ There shall no man be able to stand before you ; for the Lord your God shall lay the fear of you and the dread of you upon all the land that ye shall tread upon, as He hath said unto you.”—Deut. 11 : 25.

IT has been said of Lafayette, that he was worthy of Liberty, for his stout and noble soul never despaired of her cause. Betrayed, duped, and dying disappointed of the emancipation of his own country, in his own day, he lifted up his eyes to Heaven, and consoled his breaking and magnanimous heart, with the vitality, virtue, freedom, and greatness of future generations. Though born among a haughty aristocracy, his heart was with the people, and his creed their sovereignty. The ambition of a throne was base in his eyes. Despots and kings were with him synonymous terms. Had he not been Lafayette, his highest aim would have been to be a Washington. Generous and glorious Frenchman! ever dear to American Liberty—the more your tomb retreats into the shade of time, the more radiant will it be with glory to the eyes of posterity. And as the image of the sacred mountain, to which millions and generations of devotees are wont to go, grows in proportion as it recedes from view, until it stands

* Delivered on Thanksgiving Day, Dec. 21, 1848, in the Presbyterian Church, in Lafayette Square, of which Dr. Scott is Pastor.—Ed.

out aloft and solitary in the confines of the horizon, so Republican France, and all regenerated nations, in all coming ages, will send their sons on a pilgrimage of generosity, chivalry, truth, and liberty, to thy tomb.

Some historians profess to have discovered a law that renders the permanent prosperity of nations a moral impossibility. They tell us that *all flesh is grass, and the glory of man is as the flower of grass*, both of man as an individual, and of man associated—that nations, like billows, rise and decline—that all things have their ebbing and flowing.

It is true that the flower blooms only to fade. It is true that all things earthly are changing, changeable, and passing away, except the tendency to change. That alone is immutable. The history of man seems to be rising or falling. Birth, progression, decay—manhood, its vigor, maturity, and decline. And so brief is manhood's stay on the summit, that we cannot tell when it reaches the highest point, nor when it begins to go down. And must it be thus with every nation? Like a tree, is there a time for a nation to be born, take root, spread its branches, yield its fruit, and then decline, decay, fall into oblivion? Is it a fixed law of the universe, that communities, like individuals, of which they are composed, no sooner attain their manhood, than they hasten to decrepitude and decay? Has the all-wise Creator ordained that nations may advance, grow till they reach their meridian glory, and that, then, without a pause, they must decline? I do not believe there is any such law in existence. I do not believe that Ineffable Goodness has ordained any such statutes concerning the fall of nations. Again and again the Sacred Scriptures promise ever-enduring prosperity to the Hebrews, if they would continue steadfast in their obedience. There was then no necessity for them to decline. It is admitted that the law of progress and decay belongs to physical objects; but it is denied that it does necessarily attach to the intellect, and to moral and religious subjects. It is admitted that the mind may fail in some of its external expressions or functions—as in the failing of the memory—that brilliant intellect may sometimes degenerate—grow feeble for the want of exercise or by dissipation, or be oppressed with the infirmities of age. But it is earnestly denied that this is always so, or that it is absolutely necessary; and if it is admitted, as it must be, that in any solitary instance a great mind goes on improving, or even holding its own, during the entire period of the body's decline from its highest maturity to death, so that at the moment of dissolution the soul goes out on its pilgrimage from the body to the regions of eternity unimpaired; then, we have enough, from this solitary instance, to prove that it is *possible* for mental, moral, and spiritual excellence to remain unimpaired to the moment of death; and, consequently, what is possible of one mind is possible of many minds—of the minds of a whole nation. And as

moral goodness is not affected essentially by the material organization with which the soul is encompassed while in this world, so the mind and its habitudes of goodness and piety, are not, by any inexorable fatality, subjected to the physical laws that govern the decay and dissolution of its material habitation; and in a mind that not only remains without decay, but goes on improving, both in intellectual strength and moral excellence, up to the moment of its elimination from the body, we have all the essential elements of prosperity and perpetuity. The developments of a nation in wealth, in arts and arms, are its *Physiques*. These belong to its material organization. These are things that are subject, in some degree, to changes, like those of the seasons of the year. But the intellect, the moral and spiritual habitudes of a nation, may be preserved as indestructible as individuality in morals—as imperishable as individual immortality. It is

———“mind, mind alone,
Hath light and hope, and life and power.”

It does not matter who has wealth, nor where it is. It is mind that governs it. It does not matter what becomes of the magnificence or vanity of material things; the mind lives, and its habitudes of virtue and piety, or their opposites, are its eternal costume. It is true of the individual physical man, that he is born, grows to greater or less maturity, and then falls into feebleness, and finally into the grave. And it is true of individual man, moral, intellectual, spiritual, that there is a time when he begins to exist, and that he progresses thenceforward, either in holiness or moral turpitude; but it is not true that he ever ceases to exist. Every soul that has ever been born into the world is still alive. Not a single intellect that has ever emanated from Jehovah, has been or ever will be annihilated. This world does not comprise all man's history. Man is not a mere animal or vegetable, that comes forth in obedience to certain physical laws, grows, ripens, and rots—then, indeed, we might fold our hands and wait our destiny, content with Napoleon's philosophy: “It is written in Heaven.” But since this world is obviously not man's goal—not the fruition but the embryo of his existence—since a thousand arguments, and a thousand and one experiences, prove that this world is probationary, and in order to a righteous retribution, some shadowings forth of which only are now visible—since it is the way of Providence to carry on the government of human things in successive and gradually advancing dispensations, as a preparation for the appearance of the new heavens and the new earth—since a law of progress is inherent in intellect—since mind in thousands and millions of instances continues to advance and expand to the last moment of its continuance in the body—since individual mind and personal virtue do, in millions of instances,

continue to advance, to expand, to grow higher, and more and more perfect, without any pause at any mundane height, and never decline—since this is confessedly true of individual virtue and individual intellect, in at least some of the persons that compose communities; and that, too, not of a few or an insignificant number, is it not palpable that a nation, composed entirely of such, *may* continue to advance in everything excellent without any decline.

While I deny that there is any necessity of Fate for a nation to fall from its glory, I admit there is danger that the cup which intoxicated Babylon, Tyre, Carthage, Athens, and Rome, may intoxicate us. There is danger that the dizzy heights which they knew not how to keep, may so turn our heads that we may not be able to stand on them. But there is no fatal necessity that it should be so. *We are able to stand, but free to fall.* While there is danger that wealth and refinement will lead to luxury, vice, degradation, and decline, we possess in Christianity all that is necessary to counteract any such tendencies. The mental vigor and tender charities of the gospel are sufficient to resist the law of decay seen so palpably in the once proud and powerful States of the old world. The Bible, and the Bible alone, can preserve the monuments of our greatness from becoming the monuments of what has been. The intellectual and moral elevation and active benevolence of the gospel, are abundantly sufficient for the glory and perpetuity of a nation. If it be asked, whether it shall ever be said of us, as of the republics of former times, that we were a great people in our day, but that, like them, we have gone glimmering into the dream of things that were—"a schoolboy's tale, the wonder of an hour"—I reply, the answer to this inquiry is in the hands of us and our children. God has left all our future in our own hands. If we can succeed in giving to our native born, and to the millions of the old world cast upon our shores in their infancy and youth, an effective education—including under this term such training as shall render their faculties prompt and active; personal independence and yet subordination, sobriety, neatness and industry—such solid knowledge as shall enlarge to the utmost the means of subsistence, by enlarging the capacities of usefulness to their fellow-citizens—such knowledge of themselves as shall inspire them with hope and with the confidence that they are men—**FREEMEN**—whose bodies and minds and families are really the objects of divine and human benevolence—and such moral and religious instruction as shall inspire them with just views of crime, and associate the idea of happiness with that of honest independence—as shall fill their hearts with a sense of the Divine Being and of their final accountability to Him, and with sentiments of fervent charity towards and sympathy with their fellow-men; if by the continued prosecution of agriculture and of the true principles of trade and commerce, we can develop

adequately our vast national resources ; if we can succeed in fully developing our moral and intellectual energies, and with these, the material resources on which the maintenance of our healthy activity depends, then our Republic will stand to the end of time ; and when the sleeping dust of ages and of empires rises to meet the Son of God, the star-spangled banner shall still be floating in the breeze. Yes, my brethren, in the cultivation of our valleys—in the ores of our mountains—in the commerce of our rivers, lakes, railroads, and sea-boards—in the purity and pre-eminent influence of women—in the vigorous prosecution of our systems of public instruction—in the universal diffusion of knowledge—in the sublime morality of the Bible—in the purity, vitality, and benevolence of the gospel of Christ, we have the elements of unshaken permanence in our institutions. And I have not a doubt, but that, in spite of the sinister predictions of speculative historians ; in spite of the dreams of aristocratic philosophers, and the ill-omened vistas of monarchists, whose wishes are father to their forebodings ; in spite of our rapidly increasing population ; in spite of the intrigues of a few disappointed, restless, selfish, narrow-minded politicians, that the United States, in every essential particular as she now is, will occupy, for ages upon ages to come, an ever-increasingly glorious position amongst the nations of the earth. And to show that our hope of republics is well founded, I propose to notice still further a few grounds of doubt, and then glance at some of the elements of their permanence.

1. Let it not be argued that we must fall, sooner or later, because all preceding States and Kingdoms have either already fallen, or are in a rapid decline. The past is a good school, but not an infallible prophet. The past is only in part the cause of the present, and of the future. As no two leaves of the forest are exactly alike, nor any two human faces, so neither are any two ages or countries exactly alike. The past may have its semblance ; but it never has its exact likeness in the present. The human body is so far the same, as to preserve its personal identity from infancy to old age, and yet its particles are ever changing. The elements of society now are in part the same as the elements of society in ages past ; and in part they are different, and in some things wholly unlike and superior to those of any former age. The religious faith of modern times, especially in our country, where there is no unhallowed, adulterous connection between Church and State, is purer than was known in the ancient world : and the religious faith of a nation has a greater influence, direct and indirect, upon its prosperity, than all other causes. The predicates, therefore, of no past age are to be applied, without considerable limitations, to the present. And as the history of no other nation corresponds to the *past* and *present* of the American people, so neither should it be considered as any

prophecy of their *future*. The ages of the world and the generations of men that have rolled past to the bourne of those before the flood, are all alike in many respects; and yet each is possessed of some peculiar feature, that gives it a distinctive prominence in the annals of the universe. It is not in classic lore only, that such distinctions have obtained as have been denominated the golden, silver, brass and iron ages; such distinctive appellations are found in sober history, which is indeed nothing less than *philosophy teaching by example*. Even in the history of the wonderful dispensations of infinite mercy to our race, we find the distinction of Adamic, Patriarchal, Mosaic, Prophetic, and Apostolic periods, ages, or dispensations. The world, like individuals, seems to have its infancy, youth, progress, and end. What years are to individuals, centuries are to the world. Sometimes, for generations, and even for centuries, a kind of intellectual and moral sleep has hung over the earth, and the human family remained dormant. And then, again, it has pleased the Divine Ruler, who permits the world to be governed in a great degree by impulses, to call forth a spirit of advancement in light and knowledge, in arts and sciences, and even in our holy religion. In the stormy times of Cromwell, whose history is yet to be written, and who was one of the purest and best and ablest men that England has ever produced, there was a strength of intellect, an earnestness, and a grasp of mind and character, that made such men as Howe, Baxter, and Milton, and a host of their compeers, tower high amid their generation, and stand forth to all coming times, as the beacon-lights of freedom of thought and of conscience. The *Crusades* was an age of strange and almost unaccountable excitements. It well nigh paralyzes belief to read of the tide of living men that Europe poured forth upon Asia for a useless achievement. Millions laid their bones to bleach on the sands of Syria; but the result was, that the arts, sciences, literature, and civilization of the East were brought into half barbarous Europe. The Protestant Reformation was an age of intense religious excitement. The discovery of this continent was the embodiment of an age intensely excited to make discoveries. The results of the civil wars of England, of the Crusades, of the Reformation, and of the discovery of this continent, were not foreseen by the respective agents of these different stupendous events. The immediate actors in carrying out these parts of the world's history, never dreamed of what has resulted from their labors. The mysterious directions of Providence seem first to blind genius as to any consciousness of its own greatness, and then by it, to accomplish the greatest, most unlooked for, and yet most beneficial results. So it has been with the English in Asia and China, and with the Americans on this continent. And hence, history should be regarded by us not merely as the *annals of political events*, but as the progress of science, inventions, and literature, and of all the great interests of

mankind. History is nothing more or less than a written account of the dispensation of Divine Providence to nations and countries. And whatever the predominant spirit of any age may be, whether it be for war, or for philosophical or religious speculations, it is the outlet of the over-excited feelings of its communities.

As our Government is an elective government—a judicious combination of the best parts of the best governments that have preceded us—so our age is instinct with those elements of personal worth, enterprise, industry, and independence, and of intelligence, and of a pure religious faith, that lay the foundation of hope for permanence in its best forms of society.

II. There are, and there will be, revolutions such as the world has not yet seen. Power will pass from the less to the greater—from the weak to the strong—from the few to the many. The Old World may become feeble. As the Greece of the Greeks of Otho is not the Greece of Pericles and Leonidas; so the Europe that now is, is not the Europe that has been, nor is it the Europe that is to be. But amidst all these convulsions that now are, and are yet to be, is there any danger to ourselves? Is it foreign invasion or internal conflicts? The former cannot be seriously apprehended even by the most timid. It is true that great nations have fallen by invasions from less cultivated regions of the earth. Such has been the course of things in southern Asia, and such was the fate of the Roman Empire; but in all such cases, corruption and effeminacy have invited the conqueror to the spoils. But no one in his senses apprehends a barbarian overthrow of Europe, or of the United States. The hordes of Russia are not likely to drive Europe back to acorns and skins. The Indians of North America do not present, at present, any appearance of sweeping American arts and agriculture, manufacturies, cities, printing-presses, and churches into oblivion. On the contrary, the expanding energies of civilized man, in both hemispheres, are every year shutting up the barbarian forces of the world into smaller and still more narrow spaces. And as to internal conflicts, the greatest causes of fear with us, are the invasion of foreign emissaries, under the guise of teachers for our youth, domestic slavery, and military despotism. The first can be effectually counteracted by our public schools, and by private seminaries of the highest order of excellence for both sexes, by true-hearted republicans. The second, domestic slavery, will be happily disposed of in all its bearings, by the good sense, firmness, compromising spirit, and Christian intelligence of our people. And the last—military despotism, which is far more dangerous than either of the former, can be counteracted by a wise, healthy, and prudent public sentiment, operating through the ballot-box and the press. We are eminently a military people—a nation of soldiers; yet the extent and diversity of our soil, our agricultural and commercial

interests, and the love of our people for economy, peace, and domestic society, and of independence—all these traits in our national character and pursuits are powerful obstacles in the way of the establishment of any military despotism—and to them should be added the combined influence of our schools, of our traditions, and the influence of our Federal Constitution, for the preservation and strict interpretation of which, there is a growing regard in the minds of the American people.

III. The base of modern liberty is wide. The points of radiance of our Republic are numerous. While large towns and cities are growing up on the Pacific, to be closely allied to those of the Atlantic, and of the West, by rail-roads, and steam-vessels, and telegraphic lines, there is also such an immense agricultural region in the interior, in the valleys of our great rivers, that it is impossible for so much power to be consolidated in any one city, or in any one part of the nation, as seriously to endanger the liberties of the whole country. The distance of our cities from one another, with their different local interests, while it renders it impossible for them ever to be leagued together under any misguided, ambitious leader, in a conspiracy against the liberties of the rural districts, also allows greater freedom from petty prejudices and passions. While all the political power of France is in Paris, governments can be made and unmade in a day. The greatest obstacles in the way of the people of Europe to sovereignty, are the great cities of St. Petersburg, Vienna, Berlin, and London, with their royal armies and arsenals, and the traditions and monuments, tombs and regalia of royalty, that everywhere blind or awe the rising masses. The great elements of the world's prosperity, now, however, are such as cannot be lost. The discoveries of modern times will never be forgotten, nor our inventions lost. Men will never forget how to make gun-powder and type—the magnetic needle and the steam-engine. The only possible way for these, and such discoveries and inventions, to be superseded, is to make others that shall far surpass them. The gains of modern society over the ancients are gains that cannot be lost. Our natural discoveries can never cease to exist, nor ever cease to produce their effects on society.

If a whole nation, or a kingdom, or continent, should be sunk into the ocean, it would not destroy the rest of the globe, nor disturb the harmony of the planets. So if one part of the civilized world should go back to barbarism, it would not endanger the existence or diffusive power of the best forms of modern civilization in other parts of the world. From the pole to the equator, and from ocean to ocean, God has raised up a people in modern times to be witnesses for political freedom and religious faith; so that if it were possible for the besom of destruction to sweep out of existence the Europe of to-day, in ages to come, it would exist in another hemisphere—if not in Australia, yet certainly in America.

IV. While the base of liberty is becoming wider and wider, and therefore stronger and stronger, it is also true that the globe, for all practical purposes, is becoming smaller and smaller, and its different countries are brought nearer and nearer together. This palpable result of agencies now rapidly at work, is exerting an absolutely incalculable influence upon the destinies of mankind.

So great and rapid are the means of communication in our day, that extension of territory, instead of being just ground of fear for our permanence, is, on the contrary, a means of throwing off a restless population, that will subdue the wilderness, and build cities and States equal to any that have heretofore existed. Our recent extension is the natural result of our institutions and of our growth, just as much so as it is the natural tendency of a boy's limbs to grow into the size and strength of a man, and then require a larger coat than when he was a boy. All we have to do with California and New Mexico, is to imitate the wise policy of the Romans, and win the love of their inhabitants by opening roads, and protecting their interests, and giving them the Bible, and the school-house, and the printing-press. Magnetic telegraphs, and the institutions of the pure gospel of the Saviour of mankind, will seem to modern Mexicans scarcely less the gifts of the gods, than the cannons and horses of Cortes did to their Indian ancestors. Ours are, however, the gifts of the God of peace, and not of the god of war—ours are the implements not of suffering, bondage, and death, but of freedom, life, and happiness.

V. As far as the history of the past establishes any great principle, it is, that no form of government is exempt from agitations, and revolutions, either in its spirit or form, or in both. Monarchies, limited, constitutional, or absolute, oligarchies, and democracies, are all subject to changes, if not in their forms of government, at least in their interpretation. In every government there are tendencies and dispositions apart from its mere letter, as uncontrollable in their nature, as are the human passions from which they spring. This is true of all governments; and in all governments, except in representative republics, the feelings and dispositions, hopes and fears of the mass, or at least of a very large part of the people, are not in harmony with the form and spirit of the government.

In January, France was a monarchy—apparently peaceable, contented, happy, and magnificent. There seemed to be no signs of dissolution. But it was not in harmony with the spirit of the people. In February the monarchy was vanished—utterly gone—and a republic in its stead. So sudden, so entire was the change, as if in a night some ocean volcanic island had been submerged, and in its place, before early morn, another had arisen, blooming in all the fragrance of Paradise. It cannot be denied but that the style, name, and form of the government of England, are sadly out of harmony with the spirit of the people. Under the name of monarchy, they have, to some extent, republican institutions; and

just in the degree that there is want of harmony, is there danger of revolutions. And if, in all governments, there is a spirit apart from the government, just as the spirit of a man is a something apart from and independent of his body; and if that spirit of a nation, under all forms of government, is constantly struggling to be free, and to extend itself; and if, in popular representative republics, this tendency is stronger than in other forms of government—all which is readily admitted, yet it is also affirmed that there is, in such popular representative republics, a greater capacity and fitness for the fullest exercise and extension of that power; and that, therefore, it is a great error in many writers on the permanency of republics, to suppose that in them the passions only are freely developed; whereas power, intellectual and moral power, keeps pace with and is actually quickened into life, by the development of independent man. Freedom *energizes* the whole body; it clothes the limbs; gives grace to its motions, and elegance to its whole appearance. Where has there been more energy of character than in the old republics of Greece and Rome, and in the free cities and confederations of the middle ages, and in Cromwell's Protectorate, and in the United States? If we admit therefore, that our government has a strong tendency to increase its power, it is abundantly equal, in all other respects, to sustain itself with an increase of power—while our institutions foster the instincts of acquisition and empire, they also enlarge our capacities for self-government, and multiply the disposition and means of benevolence. And, with us, the spirit and the body are harmonious. The union is happy—the form of our government is just such as the people desire; or, if it be not, we have constitutionally provided for a revolution every four years. There can be no inducement for an insurrection, or a violent overthrow of our institutions. A little patience and time will effect any change that the great body of the people really desire.

The manifest tendency of our age and of modern society, is progression—onward. Progress is the law of man. Revolutions may be turned aside—they may be thrown into improper channels, but they do not go backwards. In every convulsion, and revolution, and war in Europe, since 1688, down to this moment, the people have gained something upon their oppressors. There have been failures in attempts at revolution—great mistakes have been committed. And there will be more failures; great errors will be perpetrated. Patriots will yet fall in this glorious work—but something is gained for God and man at every blow. *Truth crushed to earth will rise again.* Long and fierce the strife may rage, but truth and liberty will prevail.

"For Freedom's battle once begun,
Bequeathed by bleeding sire to son,
Though baffled oft, is ever won."

Among the elements of permanence in modern civilization, not yet introduced in my discourse, I shall, in conclusion, name two

—the PRINTING PRESS, AND MAN'S SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS THAT HE OUGHT TO BE FREE. The art of printing and publishing, so well understood in our day, is justly regarded as the chief of all the inventions that have marked the progress of human genius. It is the most momentous work in man's history. It is an art that contributes to ornament, elegance, and utility. In preserving the memory of former discoveries and perpetuating the knowledge of the past, it confers the greatest advantages on mankind. As the human mind gains on the ignorance of the past, the press daguerreotypes its highest and best forms for the future, and enables us to begin our enquiries at the point which the diligent research of our fathers had arrived at. But the utility of the press is not only seen in its power of perpetuating knowledge, but also in giving to human ideas and knowledge an almost unlimited diffusion. The Creator gave man language to communicate his ideas and perpetuate his discoveries. When the art of printing was not in use, the means of communication were scanty, and the method of perpetuating knowledge, still more defective. The arts of man in a savage state are handed down from father to son, and the history of their deeds, both public and private, is preserved chiefly in songs.

But important as the art of writing was, still, even in its most improved state, it fell unspeakably short of the art of printing. In the East, and generally, it was monopolized by the priests; and when their colleges and temples were overturned and destroyed, then learning perished likewise. Among the Greeks and Romans the cost of transcribing was so great, that but few could possess copies of books, and learning was confined to few individuals. The works of authors who had written in the most elegant style, or on the most useful subjects, were continually in danger of being lost, on account of the small number of copies, by the ravages of time, fire, or civil commotion, or by coming into the possession of men utterly ignorant of their value. Learning has sustained immense losses from all of these causes in past ages; but they cannot be repeated since printing has so multiplied the copies of all the valuable works known to mankind. Nor can the world be any longer imposed upon by the forgeries, interpolations, and corruptions of bigots—such as was practised to an incredible extent in the dark ages.

By means of the press, the knowledge of different schools and of the most eminent philosophers of all countries is brought to the chamber of the student.

The press has made the acquisition and communication of all knowledge, both ancient and modern, more easy, general, and certain, and perpetuates it to all future ages. By it the continuance of learning in the world is placed beyond the reach of any temporary or local barbarism, or invasion, or national degeneracy; and by it also we are enabled to transmit our discoveries and reflections, and a knowledge of our inventions and improvements in

arts and arms, in agriculture and manufactures, and in the science of government, to the ends of the earth, and to the end of ages.

Printing is superior to every other art of a like kind in the perpetuity of its youth. It is not subject like other arts to the baneful influence of time or accident; the works of the sculptor are often broken to fragments and reduced to dust; paintings fade, or are torn to shreds, and finally perish. But printing stamps immortality upon the ideas committed to it, by renewing at will, and without ceasing, exact copies of its work.

In written discourses, images, illustration, variety of language, and power of style are perpetuated, and masterly thoughts are made to live and beget their like. We are made to stand before the living man—and *see* his reasonings exact, clear, overpowering—his exquisite shadings and the harmonious blending of colors—until we see beneath a transparent and glossy skin, the blood circulate, the veins turn blue, and the muscles assume their strength.

The mere speaker is like a statue placed in an elevated niche, that must be cut somewhat roughly and of a proportioned over-size to produce the proper effect at a distance. The written discourse is the life-like natural size. "The press is the tribune amplified. Speech is the vehicle of intelligence, and intelligence is the mistress of the material world.*"

Nor is the beneficial influence of the press confined to the useful arts alone, since it is also intimately connected with whatever is ornamental in the arts of man. For it is the faithful register of the refined inventions of the sublimest geniuses in the most polished ages and countries; and, though the productions of elegant artists may be destroyed—though the best contributions of modern civilization should perish, yet the *descriptions* of the artist's work, and of these institutions being preserved by the press, will serve to raise in future, other artists and other institutions, that shall rival those that have preceded. The press makes *immortal* the works of elegant authors and artists, and thereby holds up a light and example to guide and assist aspiring minds to superior excellence.

The press and the tribune were the two-edged sword of the old French Revolution, and of all the revolutions of the present year in Europe. It was the press that taught France to think and to act in 1789, and in February, 1848. The written discourses of Foy, Bignon, Lafitte, Constant, Dupont De l'Eure, Royer-Collard, and the impassioned appeals of Mirabeau and his colleagues, accomplished the political education of France. Speeches that produce but little effect in the Senate, often exercise a great influence in print. If they have less influence in the formation of laws, they have more in the formation of public opinion, and it is public opinion that gives sanction, execution, and permanence to the laws, or overturns and remodels them. He, therefore, who has a thousand readers has a greater influence than

* Benjamin Constant: Orators of France, p. 127.

he who has a thousand hearers. And as this is peculiarly an age of publishing what is *spoken*, as well as what is written: so the institution of popular liberty, founded and supported in a great degree by the press, must live and flourish so long as liberty has a voice to speak.

The Heaven-descended right of suffrage, is the mother of all our laws and institutions. It is the foundation of our whole government and of our whole constitution. *Our constitution is our body politic at rest. Our elections are our body politic in action.* And the great guarantee of the one and trumpet-call of the other is the press. An arbitrary, iniquitous, chaotic aristocracy, may grow up where there is no press, and sit like an incubus for centuries upon the inalienable rights of man. Leagues, alliances, public and secret, may be cemented by charters, monopoly grants, and royal marriages, to enable certain families and classes to consume without producing—to live without laboring, and possess themselves of all the public offices without being qualified to fill them, and to seize upon all the honors of the state, without having merited any—but when the press speaks forth, their days are numbered. There is no power in earth or hell that can prevail over and keep a people in slavery, that are taught by an unfettered press the right of self-government.

The press is more mighty than armies, kings, and senates—as rapid and intelligent as thought. None are too low for it to reach. None can be above its influence. It fascinates, inspires, and forms the masses of society for every effort. The strugglings of the press for liberty, and of the conscience for freedom, have filled all Europe with convulsions. It was the press, aided by the living teacher, that produced the great revolutions of the sixteenth century. It was the press that made England a Protestant country. The press has removed the moss of ages that had covered up the origin and root of things, and discovered their true nature. It has opened the book of inalienable rights to the people, and taught them how to resist the usurpations of force and fraud. It was the press that overthrew the parliaments of the French Restoration. And of the blood and vitals of the press were born the government and monarchy of July, 1830; and yet under his majesty, Louis Philippe, the press was fettered and tortured. For seventeen years this press-made monarch compelled the press either to lie or to be silent—compelled it either to abstain from discussing the principles of the government, or to submit to the blows of a gouty senate. It was bound hand and foot, and placed in manacles between the “ruins of confiscation and the burning tombs of Salazie.”

But the day of reckoning came. For the press, like Prometheus, the more it is bound and fettered, the more eloquent, the more inspired, the more indignant, the more tempestuous, and the more Jove-defying it becomes. The very shaking of its chains sent the ungrateful monarch it had made, and all his dynasty, to the “tomb of all the Capulets,” even before a righteous Providence had given

his body to the worms. "Unlimited liberty of the press," was the exclamation with which General Bertrand closed all his public speeches. And he was right. *The bulwarks of all republics are the Bible and the unlimited freedom of the press.*

It is true that the press, like every other good thing, may be abused, and be employed to spread error and impiety. It is sometimes the case that Divine Providence permits those very means, which, when well applied, are the most effectually conducive to the best purposes, to be so abused and misapplied as to become the most potent engines of mischief.

Even the Son of Mary was set for the fall and rise of many, and for a sign which shall be spoken against. The result of Messiah's coming among men, depends altogether upon their own spiritual discernment of Him. The gospel is salvation to the believer, but destruction to the unbeliever. Salvation and doom are correlative terms. Heaven and hell are correlative places. Great blessings suppose great evils.

It is impossible for printing to spread errors more baneful than were propagated before its invention, while on the other hand, it enables the friends of truth and religion to pursue the baleful steps of their adversary with an antidote that cannot be nullified, so that this wonderful effort of human skill not only supplies the most sure methods of perpetuating every new discovery in the other arts and sciences, but at the same time affords the ablest assistance in the support of religion, truth, and virtue.

There remains one other out of many more grounds of hope for the perpetuity of Republics, that I cannot wholly omit; and that is—*Man's self-consciousness that he is a child of Liberty, and that he is capable of self-government, and of perpetuating the best principles and forms of government.* Philosophers and theologians tell us of a moral sense, and a religious sense in man, the existence of which prove that man is a moral and religious being, just as his lungs prove that he was made to breathe. So likewise the political sense, that is a faculty of being conscious that we possess within us the elements of freedom from our Maker, and which also excites all men, in all ages, to desire the fullest enjoyment of civil liberty, is a proof that man is made to be free, and to be happy only in the enjoyment of freedom. The soul's self-consciousness of its own existence, of its own free agency, and of the existence of God, has long been regarded as one of the strongest proofs of a Deity. "The longing after immortality," in all men, and in all countries, and the conjectures and hopes, even of the rudest, for a brighter existence after death, is proof almost as strong as demonstration, that there is a future immortal state of being. In like manner, the hopes of mankind, concerning a political millennium, may be deemed a prophecy of its coming. Such hopes have existed from the earliest times, and have grown stronger and stronger, and spread wider and wider, as cycle after cycle rolled down the skies. Have the ardent longings of the

purest and best men, of the wisest and the holiest men of antiquity and of modern times, been raised up merely to be thrown to the ground! Divine Providence will not thus tantalize the sons of men. The longings of our race after freedom have sometimes been embodied in tradition, in song, and in fables; but even the fables were imitations of the truth. The shadow is proof that there is a substance.

The universality of some kind of religious worship or belief—the tenacity with which most men hold to their religious dogmas, and even the excesses committed by religious zeal, bigotry, and superstition, are deemed a strong proof of the reality and vast importance of religion. There is in man a religious sense that recognizes, at the bottom of all this, the earnest desire of his soul for happiness, for communion with God, for participation in the divine nature as its true birthright. This anxious longing of man's spirit to pass the gulf which separates his God-derived soul from its glorious Creator—this ardent wish, even though to himself unconscious of its full import, to secure that union with God, the Father of all spirits, which alone can renew human nature—though ignorant of the way to accomplish it, still struggling forth amidst superincumbent masses of error, delusion, falsehood, superstition, and unbelief, and aspiring after that heart-healing, soul-vitalizing power, which Christianity only reveals, is justly regarded as a proof of the truth of the gospel.

The way for the introduction of Christianity was prepared by the co-working of supernatural with natural elements. The natural development of the heathen world had prepared them for the new light which emanated from Judea. The whole history of the Jews was preparatory to the coming of the Messiah. It was emphatically, in every sense, the fullness of time, when God made the highest manifestations of Himself to man by His Son, who was the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and the fullness of the ineffable Godhead. The Messiah was born King of the Jews, whose political life was a theocracy, and a type of the *Kingdom of God*. He was the culminating point of all Jewish light and glory; and as the particular typifies the universal—the earthly, the celestial—so David, the monarch who had raised the political theocracy of the Jews to the pinnacle of glory, typified that greater monarch, in whom the *Kingdom of God* was to display its glory.* Christ sprang from the fallen line of royal David, just as the sceptre was departing from Judah, and the law-giver from between his feet.

In the minds of both Jews and Pagans there were many gross errors about the coming and character of the Messiah, but neither their unbelief nor their erroneous faith, made void the truth of God. The all-wise Creator working good out of evil, sometimes uses men's errors to lead them to a knowledge of the great truths of salvation. Superstition often paves the way for faith, and incre-

* See Neander's great work, *Life of Christ*, p. 19.

dulity itself becomes the handmaid of the sublimest piety. Oppression prepares the way for liberty. Moses came when the tale of bricks was doubled. So He who *maketh the wrath of man to praise him, and restraineth the remainder of wrath*—who raiseth up one and casteth down another—and whose right it is to reign, has condescended to the plans of men in training them for civil and religious liberty. God has often condescended not merely to the feelings and thoughts of men, but even to their failings and their prejudices, not to approve of them, but to use them as a means of bringing men to the truth. "God," says Neander, "condescended to the platforms of men in training them for belief in the Redeemer, and meets the aspirations of the truth-seeking soul even in its error." The longings of the whole world for a Saviour—the earnest expectations of both Jews and Pagans, that a deliverer would come, were rays of light streaming from the invisible world, which on other subjects and in all other ways was unfathomable darkness. These rays found their embodiment in the Star of Bethlehem, which pointed to the Sun of Righteousness then risen upon the world for its universal illumination.

In patriarchial times—in the Hebrew commonwealth—in the earliest forms of Pagan governments—in the best days of Greece and Rome, Divine Providence gave some pledge and earnest of better things to come.

The great idea of man is redemption—from sin—through the Messiah, and from ignorance, slavery, and every evil, as a fruit and consequence of his redemption from sin. The two greatest days in the annals of the human race, are the day of the Incarnation of the Son of God, and the day of Representative Republicanism. And as all the previous history of the world was a preparation for the one, so also it was for the other. The longings of mankind for republican institutions, whether embodied in poetry, devotion, or romance, whether uttered by Plato or Sir Thomas Moore, were streamlets of light foretelling the luminary that was to appear in the fullness of time. All past history—the thousands of years, and the hundreds of generations that have passed, have all been in order to and co-laborers for the present. The results of their labors in their best form, are the representative republics of our day. The way for the development of the model of representative republicanism, was most wondrously prepared by the traditions, longings, and aspirations of the ancients, by the discovery of this continent, and by the precise time of the discovery, and the circumstances, condition, internal and external, civil and religious, of the nations that discovered and colonized in the New World, and especially in the times and characters that Providence ordered for the settlement of the English colonies in America.

As in the original creation, the *earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. And God said, let there be light: and there was light*—there were faint streamings of light over the immense chaos: but no sun until afterwards the

Almighty collected the gleamings into a great globe of light, and set the sun in the *firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth, and to rule over the day and over the night*. So the Ineffable, in tracing out with his finger this globe, and in writing its history, when as yet none of its stupendous events "were fashioned, being imperfect"—reserved this continent to be the firmament of the sun of human Freedom, into which should be gathered and condensed all the hopes and aspirations of bards and prophets, and of all devout and earnest true-hearted souls, who have loved their race and labored and prayed for their emancipation from error and sin. It is in the teachings of Revelation, that the world is to be filled with the glory of God; in the institutions of modern civilization, which are chiefly the effects of the gospel, and are necessary in order to the fulfilment of its glorious mission on the earth—in the promises, prophecies, and coming glorious realities of Messiah's reign, that we see the unfailing hope of Republics, and the undying elements of their perpetuity.

In all ages and in all countries, wherever the faintest effulgence of liberty has gleamed upon the soul, there have been earnest striving after its plenitude. True liberty, under constitutional forms, the sole passion of the generous heart, is the only treasure worthy of being coveted. Its victories are those of intellect, and not of brutal force; its principles pass not away, but are eternal. It holds all men to be brothers—recognizes no legal authority, but that of responsible magistrates, no moral superiority, but that of virtue. Such liberty is destined to see pass before it, the stormy flight of absolute empires, like those clouds that dim for a moment the purity of a serene sky, and will at no distant day, see disappear before her triumphal march, all custom-house barriers and secret tribunals, all prosecutions for political offences, all aristocracies, monopolies, close corporations, standing armies, censorships of the press, of schools, and of religion; and in a holy alliance in the name of Right, Independence, and of a common interest, and of civilization, tranquillity, happiness, and religion, will confederate national congresses confer for the amicable settlement of all national differences, and the sword shall perish for ever.

LIBERTY, which has been the midnight meditation of the sage, and the inspiration of the poet, and the long desired Messiah of those that have been sitting in chains and darkness for ages, and for whose almighty avater the very tombs of the past have cried out, has at last descended from heaven upon the earth to redress and embellish it; to be the life of commerce, and the inspiration of the fine arts, the first aspiration of youth, and the sublime invocations of old age, and the pathway to fadeless glory. And after that she shall have broken the chains of ignorance, meanness, covetousness, superstition, error, and bigotry; liberty will lead forth her illuminated procession with palm branches, amid hymns of glory to attend the last and eternal funeral of civil and religious despotism. **AMEN.**